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The Healing Power of Music

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Music That Heals: An Interview With Stephen Wandu Bimo

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Reflections on CMN's DEI Process

In 2022, CMN began a process of reckoning with the need for greater attention to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the organization. Three members share their reflections on this groundbreaking process. Page 14.

Introducing Playlists

CMN will now begin curating playlists to share our members' work. Our intention is for these playlists to highlight the incredible music our members create and to make it easily accessible and shareable. Page 19.

I Hear a Knockin' at My Door

"I wrote this song during the initial pandemic shutdown, when so many of us were isolated from regular routines and were dealing with estrangement from our friends, colleagues, and even family members." Page 22.

Music That Heals: An Interview With Stephen Wandu Bimo

by Stuart Stotts

Stephen Wandu Bimo is the Executive Director of I CAN South Sudan (ICSS)[1]*. He's a musician, artist, student, activist, administrator, and powerful force for good in the lives of refugee children and families. His primary work with displaced people is in the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Uganda, where refugees escaping the conflict in South Sudan find shelter, food, and other resources. Among those other resources is a program that employs music and art to bring hope, community, and the opportunity to address trauma from conflict, war, and loss of home. Stephen belongs to CMN and has forged connections with several members around projects and fundraising.*

The express mission of I CAN from the website is:

> *To advance and improve the well-being, protection, survival, and development of a refugee, returnee, or Internally Displaced Child (IDC) in Uganda and South Sudan. To inculcate a sense of meaning, purpose and hope in the lives of vulnerable children.*

I conducted this interview with Stephen through email. I was deeply moved by his commitment and the arc of his story. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Stephen, thank you for agreeing to talk with us. I know our members will be moved by your work. Let's start with the basics of your own story.

I was born on November 9, 1985. I am from a family of nine children. I am the first born to the late Rev. Henry Wandu Bimo and Apostle Grace Wenepai Enosa. The two met in a choir at Episcopal Church of Sudan in 1980, when my father was sent to train choirs in Yambio Diocese on singing and playing guitar. My mother was a choirmaster in the Church, and that is how their love story started.

My family fled the war between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Southern Sudan and the Bashir Government of Northern Sudan in 1990. We went to the Central African Republic where I grew up in the refugee settlement in Mboki. My mother taught me how to sing, and when I joined the Sunday school choir, I loved singing and admired songwriting as a kid. I kept on trying to compose a song but could not make it work.

When we returned to Southern Sudan in 2000 on voluntary repatriation, I was soon promoted to be the Sunday school teacher. This experience helped me to work with children and helped build my songwriting skills. I led many children from Yambio Diocese and expanded to different parishes in Yambio.

In 2003, I traveled to Uganda to take care of my sick father. While in Arua, Uganda, I was also charged with the responsibility to be a Sunday school teacher at Abriumbati Church. In 2004, my father died, leaving me with the responsibility for my siblings. I joined my uncle's musical band, called Mbaraza Gospel Band, as a singer and composed two songs as well as the title track of the band's first album. That is when my professional singing career started.

I had to move to Kampala for my diploma course with the help of my mother who had sought asylum in Norway. In 2008, I started a solo music career as a singer with the music name Ambassadeur Koko. I graduated in 2009 with a diploma in public relations, and I decided to first go look for a job in Yambio to take care of my siblings. In 2009, on my return to South Sudan, I was elected to be president of the Artist Association in Western Equatoria State, and I used my position to promote younger talents who are prominent singers today in South Sudan. I also participated in writing the lyrics of South Sudan national anthem in 2011 and competed in composing the national anthem.

It sounds like you have gone back and forth between Sudan and Uganda several times. How long have you been in Uganda this time, and do you see yourself returning to Sudan?

I have been in Uganda since 2016. I went back to South Sudan in February 2018 when my younger brother was killed by unknown persons and his body dumped by the market. I took his body from Juba to Yambio for a burial. I traveled again to Yambio recently in September 2022 to supervise the new branch of I CAN South Sudan we opened there, and I stayed for a week.

I will return home when it is conducive to live for me and my family. Now there is relative peace in my hometown and the capital, but the level of lawlessness and killings is high. Anyone, anytime, can decide to kill you, and they can do so without any justice given, and I fear for my life and the lives of my children.

Stephen Wandu Bimo

Can you give our readers a short background on the war in Sudan to provide some context?

The war in Sudan has been a generational war. A guerilla war began in Southern Sudan in the 1950s. The conflict intensified in horrific violence from 1983 to 2005, which ended with South Sudan's independence. From the website Operation Broken Silence[2]: "The war and genocide in Southern Sudan have been described as having racial and religious origins and roots in oppressive marginalization. There is truth to be found in these arguments; however, the primary reason for this conflict is the system of exploitative and extremist governance in Khartoum that began to emerge in the 1970s."

After the independence of South Sudan from Sudan, another war started in 2013 between the president and his vice president along tribal lines, a war that drove me outside the country in 2016. A peace agreement was signed in 2018, but its full implementation has continuously been postponed. As of now, there are numerous rebellion groups still fighting despite the peace, and there are continuous tribal conflicts and natural disasters that continue to drive people away from the country.

As a result of war and natural disasters, there has been a large refugee population dispersed outside of Sudan. You've taken on the mission of helping with children. Beyond the basics of living, what kind of musical and educational experiences can you offer?

Music, Dance, and Drama
We engage children in song practices, dancing, vocal trainings, instrumental learning, drama acting, and cultural dance.

Comedy
We give children skills of comedy.

Bible and Quran study
We engage refugee children who are Christians in Bible story studies, preaching, prayers, and memory verse practices as well as singing gospel songs. For the children who are Muslims we provide a platform to learn prayers, recite Quran verses, and practice their religion.

Storytelling
We have a session for storytelling that gives children a platform to tell their stories. We occasionally invite elders in the community to come and tell stories to the children. In South Sudan, every evening the elders bring together children to tell stories, to keep them in touch with their culture, and to learn stories from different cultures. It is also a session that helps the children ask important questions to better understand their culture or the culture of the other community.

Sports and Games
Children play football and other games for physical development. Others practice acrobatics.

Life Skills Training
We engage children with practical activities, such as tie-dyeing of clothes, art and paints, sanitizer making, and making beaded craft items.

Public Speaking
We mentor the children on how to speak in public and handle crowds or interviews.

Sex Education

We have sessions handled by Child Protection Officers disaggregated by gender and ages to speak to the children about their body changes and give a platform for the children to ask important questions.

Counseling and Healing

We monitor the children and have a reporting channel for them to share their plight. The child protection people counsel them and help answer their questions or comfort them. Sometimes the problem may require material support, but we do not have a specific budget in place for this and so this comes from individual or staff contributions or money from our savings.

Expressive Writing

We have periodic sessions to teach the children how to write and how to speak. We fill gaps that their schools do not provide.

Disabilities

We identify and assess children with disabilities and recommend them or refer them for support. We enroll children with disabilities in school and train their teachers and parents on how to handle them at home and in school. We respond to emergency needs of the children under our program.

I CAN children group photo

Trauma is a huge issue all over the world, for many different reasons and causes. How do you see trauma being addressed by music? Is it about the words? The music? The experience of singing together? The recognition from others for their part in creativity? How has your own trauma as a refugee been addressed by music?

Music is a great tool for trauma healing, and I have had experience being healed of trauma by music. Between 2012 and 2017, I was deeply traumatized as I went through difficult situations in my life: I lost my position as the President of Western Equatoria Artist Association in South Sudan, and in the same week, I lost my job as secretary for the State Advisor on Economic Affairs in the state government; my first wife divorced me; and I had to restart life from zero. As someone famous, I lost friends and family members, and my only comfort was music. My own music turned out to be my advisor, the lyrics of my own songs started to speak back to me, my own lyrics started to console me, and my own music started to guide my way out of the situation. Here is a link to some of my songs: https://soundcloud.com/ambassadeur-koko[3].

Some of my own songs that gave me courage in the situation were "Istakal Shedid"[4], "Winner"[5] and others I no longer have access to. They helped me rise through the situation and heal again. These are songs I sang to give hope and courage to others when I was well off, but they turned out to be songs that helped revive me instead.

As a refugee in Central African Republic, my growth in Sunday school, singing, and being surrounded by friends helped me to overcome so many traumatic situations as a kid and helped me grow responsibly. Music can soothe the soul, comfort, and speak directly to someone even in a place or at a time that you have no one else to speak to you. Every aspect of music is therapeutic. The melody, the instruments, and the company of those you sing with all have effects in the healing process, and I strongly believe in music as a therapy.

Using music as a therapy in the humanitarian response is a new concept and something many do not believe in. I find myself explaining so much for the donors and partners to help them understand my reason for allocating money to the music department. Some find it a waste of resources, but it is something that I have personally experienced changing my own life, and it has had an impact in the lives of the children I have engaged. Besides that, it helps us express our trauma; it helps in creating a platform where counseling can be provided. It draws away our mind from other thoughts and bring us focus on messages that can help us reconsider the decision we are making.

I would like to see music adopted as part of the emergency humanitarian response because there is no better time to bring it in than at a point when someone is deeply traumatized. Much attention is paid to shelter, food, and health, and no attention is given to the social and mental aspect of a person after a disaster.

"Tuko Pamoja" ("We Are One") video

Also tell us about how you connect visual art and music? What's the story of how this developed and what you have learned along the way?

We always hire video companies to shoot video of our children. The song can be derived from a common situation in the community that we feel the need to address. We sometimes give children the platform to share their view on certain topic, and we get such points from the children to compose them into song.

I am the writer of the recent album called *Tuko Pamoja*, and all the songs were done after short meetings with the children. Sometimes after composing, the children also have a say on the lyrics and have suggestions, and we adjust them until we all agree on the song. We normally take weeks practicing. Since the children are many, they all can't be selected to travel to Kampala (we have no recording studio at the settlement and the nearest ones are in Koboko and Arua, but they are not of good quality). We did our recent recording at a place eleven hours' drive from the refugee settlement, and the cost of travel makes it difficult to go with many children. We select the children based on performance and talent. Sometimes the children complain why we only keep taking certain children and exclude them, which is why we do it rotationally these days.

It requires several adults to travel with the children for keeping them safe, getting them hotel rooms, facilitating their meals, and caring for those who may fall sick. We sometimes take them out to the recreational centers for refreshment and exposure.

With video, we must provide costumes, hire the video company, write lyrics, and share it with partners for approval before the video is produced, and then facilitate the children's care during the whole activities of video shooting.

These are the few I can share. It is a costly activity that partners do not fund, but we really spend time negotiating to have this approved.

I CAN singers in the recording studio

Tell me about the initial story of I CAN South Sudan. Your part in it, your philosophy, early actions, and struggles.

When war started in South Sudan in 2013, I was living with my wife and two children in Yambio. I had lost my job as Secretary to the Advisor on Economic Affairs, but we started an indigenous seeds multiplication project funded by Caritas Austria, and I was running a small internet business in Yambio. The rebellion reached my hometown, Yambio, and the rebels captured the small village, Mombai, where the seed project was based, and they looted all the seeds we were multiplying. Life became difficult, and with support from my longtime friend Kiera Chapman in Sheffield, United Kingdom, I was able to leave Yambio and flee to Uganda.

On arrival in Uganda on January 14, 2016, my family and I registered as urban refugees. My mother in Norway was sending us small support for rent, but it was not sufficient for our survival. I enrolled my wife in a training on how to make craft items, and we opened an online shop at Etsy. This helped us produce and sell online, but the business suddenly died off as we were unable to continue paying the online charges and the cost of sending items abroad was high. Life was difficult, but we kept on going.

One day I was Googling for information on refugees in Uganda, and I came across a report published by World Vision on how they were struggling to support unaccompanied refugee minors who had fled South Sudan without their parents. They were running out of ideas on how best to support the children emotionally and socially. This is when I was touched by the report and felt I could do something.

By then I had nothing and was more dependent, but I remembered, what I had was music. I realized I could use my music talent as a therapy for trauma healing for the children, as well as giving the children voice to advocate and seek support toward their plight and send the message worldwide. And I could also help keep these children in touch with their culture in a foreign country.

I introduced the idea to two of my friends, and they agreed to join me, and so we started this by mobilizing the children, teaching them songs, and taking pictures and video of our sessions to post on our Facebook pages. We registered as a community-based organization. We could have individual contributions, and we bought soap and scholastic materials and distributed them to the children. We kept on knocking on doors and sending emails to friends for support. In 2018, one of my German friends I worked with in South Sudan replied to my email and told us he had gotten support for our initiatives from Misereor, and they were willing to give us 5,000 euros. This helped us record our first album of six songs with the children. We shot our first video and helped lay a stronger foundation for the organization.

Can you tell me a little bit about your connection to CMN—how you found us, how you benefit from the association?

We were still looking for organizations, friends, or partners around the world who are doing the same or similar thing we do or who could fund us more and through whom we could learn and grow. I remember I was walking down the street on September 19, 2018, when I searched through our Twitter account and found out about the CMN Conference. I was much interested and proceeded to read on the CMN website, where I realized the great work CMN is doing and that it was a home to many of the people dedicated to working with children. I went to the comment sections and read the great comments and testimonies written for the work of CMN, and hence I wrote to CMN, and Jane Arsham immediately replied. I received an offer to pay for my membership; this is how I and our organization became members of the great family of CMN.

Becoming members of CMN has helped us learn from different ways of how best to run our program. We have made friendships; we have received love and support from members and been given a platform to showcase the work of our children. This has linked us to other platforms and opportunities to promote our children’s music.

I have completed my Bachelor of Art in Child Development at Africa Renewal University thanks to support from the CMN members, and I am equipped with knowledge to advance the work and support more children in the refugee settlement.

A session on art and painting for I CAN children

I know that you have worked with Pam Donkin. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

We met Pam Donkin on the CMN forum, and when we heard her songs, we fell in love with "Planting Seeds of Love" because it falls within the thematic area of our work on peace building. The lyrics and song were loved by our children, and we believed this song could be a great tool in building the community we are in. We come from a conflict which is on tribal lines, and this conflict exists among tribes at the settlement, and there is conflict between refugees and host community. This song was speaking directly to the situation. When we shared the song to some radios in South Sudan, they started playing it.

Pam also directed us to her website, where we got the lesson plans we could use for the song. We were able to buy colored pencils, T-shirts, pens, art books, and seeds to plant and use as symbols of peace to share with others around. The children learned how to draw and express themselves and their trauma through the art. This program was extended to school as well. Through the drawing, the children have been able to develop their knowledge in art and have started painting. These beautiful paintings can be sold to help the children.

Our children love the song and sing it together as an interlude during our other activities.

For more on Stephen and Pam's collaboration, see "Planting Seeds of Love in South Sudan"[6] *in the Fall 2019 issue.*

What are your biggest challenges in the work that you do? What would you suggest for others who might want to build on your work?

We face several challenges as an organization to advance our work.

We have one building that we are using for both the office and the children's programs. When both fall at the same time, it becomes difficult for us to handle both. Bidibidi has annual rainfall ranging from 1,050 to 1,350 mm and an annual temperature ranging from 24 to 27 degrees Celsius. When it is rainy season, it is difficult to run our program, as there is not enough space for handling both office work and hosting children.

We have opened other centers in the community to take our services closer to the children who are far away from our center, but these centers are run under trees or in other community centers and when the community center has a program the same day of practice, our children's programs are postponed.

We have 301 children with disabilities. These children face greater challenges. As their parents go in search of food for them, they are left alone with no caregiver, and so a recreation center for these children would help the parents leave the children under our care and help the children receive some therapeutic and rehabilitation activities that would heal them and make them be part of the society.

We are engaging children in music and our work has impacted their lives. We have seen the children getting active, getting off their depression and able to speak and play around and become active members of their groups. During COVID-19, child pregnancy and child marriage grew, and youth taking drugs. Thanks to our program, none of our children have become victims of this, because we provide attachment to the children and have personnel who advise and counsel them and help them see beyond the refugee life.

The children have different talents, but we lack musical instruments and a recording studio. We signed a partnership agreement with BRASS for Africa funded by Music Connect and they visit once or twice a week to teach our children how to play brass band instruments. We are glad our children are picking up these instruments, but they are only brought around occasionally, and the children do not have access to them all the time to perfect their learning.

Mostly what we are giving the children is a social space where they can freely be children and learn, have an attachment, and heal from their daily traumatic situation, but when they go back home, they face lots of difficulty. Some do not have a mattress they can sleep on; some don't have mosquito nets and are exposed to sickness; some have not proper houses.

These are situations we would like to help, but the funding we get is restricted and predetermined by donors, and hence our effort to negotiate and suggest best ways to help the situation is declined. When we talk of food for the children, they say World Food Program is giving food and we cannot be allowed to give food. But the food ration for refugees continues to diminish: a person is entitled to 4.5 kilograms of maize corn per month and 0.8 liter of cooking oil, and now soap, sanitary pads, and salt are no longer being given to refugees. Refugees are not given other nonfood items, such as mattresses. So, you can see the children happily singing in a video, but they are living a difficult life situation and we are unable to handle some of this situation due to our funding constraints.

One of the other challenges we face is education for the children. We have children who are finishing primary school to go to secondary school, but they do not have sponsorship to access better and quality education. There is free primary school education at the settlement, but the education level is poor, because there are few schools and each class is overcrowded with 300 to 400 pupils, and this makes it difficult for a teacher to teach and be able to help different pupils. There is poor pay for teachers, and they reluctantly come to school or teach.

The school provides no feeding for pupils at school, and they must run home looking for food during break time, but their families cannot afford two meals per day. Yes, we offer good programs of music with the children, but this is not holistic without the academic education of the child, and we are unable to sponsor their education to better schools outside the settlement.

Stephen, I CAN kids, and other partners after a press conference in Kampala to officially release *Tuko Pamoja* album

I want to acknowledge the difference here between our members and you. We come from privileged backgrounds, just by being Americans. It's a long way from Uganda. How can we most helpfully deal with that difference? How can we be culturally sensitive and helpful without playing into stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings? I'm not asking this very well, but . . .

Distance is not a barrier for love, and despite the distance, we are grateful of how CMN has been able to unite us. Music is an international language that can cross borders and enter restricted areas without checks, and the fact that we all believe in music brings us closer to each other and makes us one family.

We have seen great initiatives of music collaboration between people of different nationalities and background that sends a bigger message to the world.

We have seen people traveling miles to meet people they have only met online, and we think this is one way.

We have seen musical instruments lying free in stores being donated, and they make an impact in lives and create a better environment for the less privileged.

Music is a culture, but it links everyone regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, and status. Appreciating and respecting each other's culture and not trying to change the other person's culture is the best way to relate.

Thank you so much for this interview. I'm awed by your work and your commitment.

Thank you and all of CMN for your interest and commitment to music and children in whatever way you do that important work.

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2. https://operationbrokensilence.org/blog/sudans-independence-to-civil-war
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6. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/features/planting-seeds-of-love-in-south-sudan.aspx
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Reflections on CMN's DEI Process

In 2022, in response to calls within the community, CMN began a process of reckoning with the need for greater attention to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the organization. A core group of members came together for this purpose, and after several weeks of difficult work, the group produced a set of guiding principles for CMN[1] and a Code of Ethics. Grounded in CMN's social justice roots, these are intended to guide interactions among members as well as interactions with children, parents, workshop presenters, and other individuals outside the organization. The group also produced a collection of Community Agreements[2] that establish specific practices for creating a safe and brave space welcoming to all.

In this article, three members of the core group share their reflections on this groundbreaking process.

Liz Buchanan

I'd like to start with some gratitude: First, for our DEI consultant, Peter Andrew Danzig, who stepped up to work with CMN on a very expedited timetable because the need was great. Peter's humor, patience, and encouragement helped ease a difficult process.

Then there was the gentle energy of Sarah Pirtle, who brought wisdom from CMN's founding and spent many hours listening to various perspectives on these issues. As always, she was filled with love and kindness, even as she reminded people of difficult truths.

I have enormous gratitude for the courage and perseverance of Nikki Rung. Nikki advocated strongly for this work and received significant pushback. She could have easily taken a walk on CMN. Instead, she stayed. Not only did she stay, she joined the CMN Board. She rocks! She kept the faith that CMN's members might do the work to repair the real harms that have taken place.

Also in the mix were the practical and wise voices of newer folks, such as Cindy Haws, Christine Petrini, Carrie Ferguson, and Harold Fyütch Simmons, and the continued probing questions and insights of longtime members Jacki Breger, Kim Wallach, Susan Picking, Tim Seston, and Jenny Heitler-Klevans.

And of course, I have a particular special place in my heart for my old friend Jane Arsham, administrative director of CMN, and for the amazing Alice Burba, president of the Board. They helped hold this all together.

This process took place not over many months, but in the space of weeks, as we aimed to finish before CMN's fall conference. People met on Zoom, edited and re-edited Google docs, met on Zoom again, and then went back and did it all again, several times. We participated in tough discussions about practices and about language. We began an ongoing discussion of how we should implement these plans among CMN members. We produced documents that will guide CMN in doing this work.

Yes, this work is an ongoing process. We don't simply shake ourselves off and say we're done.

So, I'd also like to offer a challenge: Step up, CMN members. This work is not easy. But it must go forward, and it must keep going. It involves seeking to understand different perspectives, being totally honest with ourselves and others, building empathy, and learning how to hold hard truths that challenge the people we thought we were.

This is an essential task for those of us who are dedicated to the well-being of the next generation. It's an essential task for this organization if it's to survive and thrive. And it's an essential task that simply makes us better human beings. So that's my challenge to all of us in CMN, whether it means dropping defenses, or being especially brave, or committing ourselves to relearning things we thought we knew. I challenge each of us to bring our whole heart and mind to this ongoing process of learning and growing.

For myself, this particular moment was a learning and growth process that deepened my understanding of how we regard folks who identify as nonbinary. Two of my close family members are nonbinary. I'll admit I've stumbled over getting pronouns right. But I've come to realize that stopping to think about and respect pronouns is just the beginning of fully accepting these wonderful people whom I've known all their lives. I have new appreciation for the way they've come to know themselves, and their determination—even though they face extreme challenges in some parts of our society—to be simply and exactly who they are.

In a larger sense, this learning process is what we are all being called to do in CMN, to be fully accepting, respectful, and open to every person. It's especially urgent for me as a person of privilege to develop empathy and always be mindful of challenges faced, often daily, by people on the margins. I'll repeat: this work doesn't end.

Nikki Rung

In the process of creating guiding principles for DEI, I learned so much about current inclusion policy across our society in general. I am incredibly proud to have worked with such a dedicated group of folks who care so much about this organization and saw the value in making sure that everything we do, formal or informal, is done with the intention of being welcoming. My commitment to making sure that *anyone* who comes in contact with our organization feels like they will be treated with respect and dignity drove my determination to see this process through to the end—despite some significant pushback at several points. Seeing how much other folks care about and believe in creating an equitable space was truly incredible, and it led me to a place of being very hopeful for the future of CMN.

I was surprised by the sheer amount of time that this all took. Like many others in this core group of incredible change-makers, I spent numerous hours researching, reading, revising, and thinking about everything in these documents. I hope these documents will make those from marginalized communities feel that this organization is truly for *everyone!*

Sarah Pirtle

I wanted to be part of building the CMN agreements because teaching children how to talk things out has been the focus of my work for forty years. The section of the writing that I worked on describes how people can meet together in dialogue if there is a breach.

Back in 1981, I was part of a national group of peace education pioneers. We shared activities and songs to help children learn how to talk instead of fighting or ignoring the problem and letting it fester. I wrote this song to acknowledge that this can be difficult and there can be a hurdle to get over.

I chose a lively Cajun style and worked with a Cajun band to represent the agitation in the process and the joy and relief when the communication works. Although I've created simple songs with lyrics such as "Speak up when something's not fair," I wanted to have a song that let children know that we adults know it's not easy.

A key step is creating apologies that aren't glib. Children know something is missing if you toss off an apology or say, "I'm sorry you feel bad," without taking ownership of problematic actions. We work on what it's like to make a sincere expression of choosing to do it differently and what it's like to figure out what helps create repair.

When I bring this song to elementary-age classrooms, I start jokingly. I ask, "Why would you never want to have to talk out a problem with a friend?" They say things like, "It's embarrassing," or, "It might make things worse." By speaking of a common human feeling of resistance, this song helps open doors. The essence of talking it out is exchanging understanding. In classrooms, we get into facing lines and act out the song.

Talk It Out
words and music by Sarah Pirtle
© 1993 Discovery Center Music BMI
on the recording Magical Earth *produced by A Gentle Wind*

Verse
I'm so angry I can't see straight.
I'm mad as a bull breaking down a gate.
You and I are in this fight.
Gotta find a way to set things right.

Chorus
Talk it out. We don't wanna do it.
Talk it out. Do we have to go through it?
Talk it out. There is no doubt.
Gotta jump back, come back, talk it out.

I walked up to talk to you.
But you turned your head. What can I do?
I try to talk, but you go away.
Gotta jump back, hear me out today.

Chorus

I didn't give up. I said, "Come on.
This fight's going on too long."
"I know," you said, and you nearly cried.
Jump back, come back, we both tried.

Chorus
Talk it out. Talk to me.
Talk it out. Now I see.
Talk it out. We can mend.
Jump back, come back, friends again.

I've been part of a hundred talk-it-outs, and what I love is seeing the moment of "a-ha" when people feel heard and can come back together.

The basic steps of a talk-it-out are these four:

1. Agree to talk together in a way that works for both of you. Do you want someone else with you?
2. Take turns talking and listening. Seek understanding of the other.
3. What would help now? This might involve an action, or it could be a discussion of how we'd do it differently next time. It might include making amends.
4. Choose a plan together or agree that it feels settled for now.

This is what we are about in CMN: making sure to take time to speak our truth, give each other chances, and grow together. The glue for social agreements is how we use them in daily life, and the hope is that the agreements create an "inner tuning fork" of the inclusive ways we want to be living so that we can all refer to this felt sense.

Someone once said at any moment we can defend ourselves or grow—and what I like is the emphasis on giving each other this very chance to learn and grow.

Some people preserve endangered species. In CMN, we help preserve endangered human values and abilities: cooperation, mutual regard, changing oppression, talking things out.

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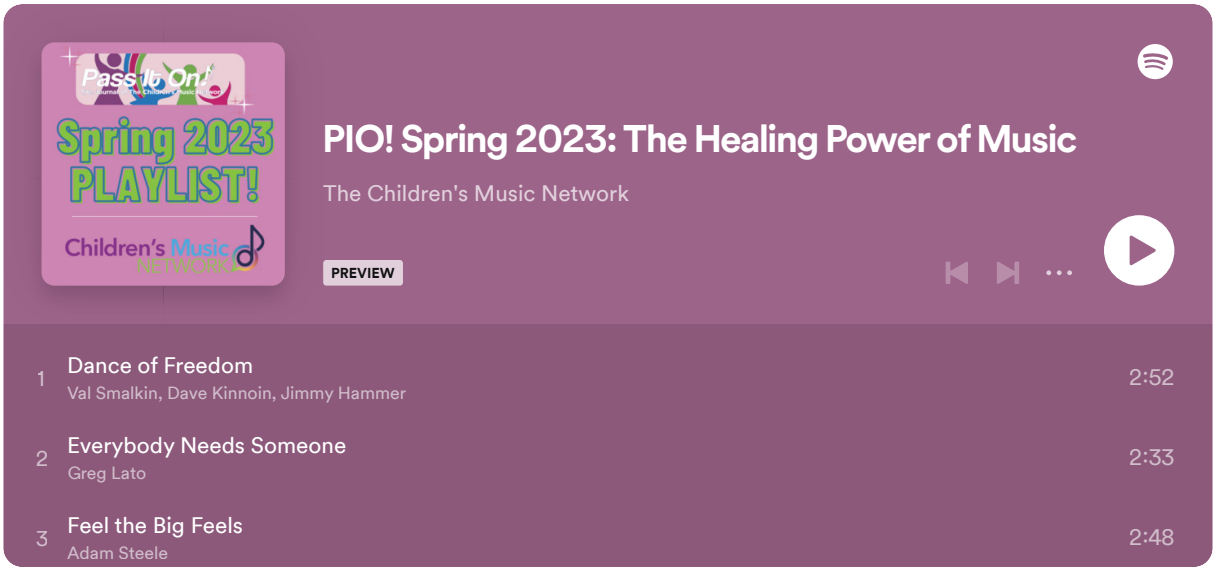
1. https://childrensmusic.org/principles
2. https://childrensmusic.org/community-agreements

Introducing Playlists

Recent trends show that musicians across the world have become reliant on two major platforms to get out their music to the masses: Spotify and YouTube. The use of playlists on both platforms have seen an incredible increase over the past decade. In keeping with these trends, CMN will now begin curating playlists to share our members' work. Our intention is for these playlists to highlight the incredible music our members create and to make it easily accessible and shareable.

Each of these playlists will be carefully curated by a CMN member and will be accompanied by a highlighted song by the curator along with some background on the song and its origins. Our hope is to engage members and add more benefits to membership. Enjoy these playlists and let us know what you think!

This issue's theme, "The Healing Power of Music," curated by Nikki Rung, brought forth a fantastic array of songs on feelings, love, self-empowerment, the natural world, the joy of making music, and much more. There's something here to open everyone's heart.



Spotify Songs

1. “Dance of Freedom” - Val Smalkin, Dave Kinnoin, Jimmy Hammer
2. “Everybody Needs Someone” - Greg Lato
3. “Feel the Big Feels” - Adam Steele
4. “Kindness Is King” (feat. Marla Vannucci & Dean Jones) - Brighter Light Brigade, Dean Jones, Marla Vannucci
5. “In My Garden” (Bedtime) - Cee Bee Teatime
6. “Can I Join Your Circle?” - Pam Felber Ziggity Zag Music
7. “You Are Awesome” - Sylvia Chave
8. “Flames” - Beppie
9. “Rainbow Love Song” - Kelli Welli
10. “Thanks to the Earth/All the Way Around the World” (Remix) - Katherine Dines
11. “The Boo Boo Gets Better By and By” - Susan Salidor
12. “Dancing Day” - Joanie Calem
13. “Heart Beats” - Claudia Robin Gunn
14. “Planting Seeds of Love” - Pam Donkin
15. “How I Love You Sun” - Jessa Campbell & the Saplings
16. “The Problem-Solving Song” - Barb Tilsen
17. “Happy Day” - Jenn Cleary
18. “Feeling Good” - Divi Roxx Kids, Divinity Roxx, FYÜTCH
19. “Let’s Make Some Music” - Strawbitty Yops
20. “So Many Ways” - Little Miss Ann
21. “Mother Nature” - Flor Bromley
22. “Sing a Melody” - Susan Leigh Picking
23. “Kindness (It Will Come Back to You)” (feat. Claudia Robin Gunn & Becky, Boris and the Beats) - Young Folkies

YouTube Songs

1. “Kindness (It Will Come Back to You)” (feat. Claudia Robin Gunn & Becky, Boris and the Beats) - Young Folkies
2. “There Is Only One of You” - Susan Picking
3. “So Many Ways” - Little Miss Ann
4. “Feeling Good” (feat FYÜTCH) - Divi Roxx Kids and Divinity Roxx and FYÜTCH
5. “Happy Day” - Jenn Clear
6. “The Problem-Solving Song” - Barb Tilsen
7. “How I Love You Sun” (Fun Sun Facts) - Jessa Campbell & the Saplings
8. “Planting Seeds of Love” - Pam Donkin
9. “Dancing Day” - Joanie Calem
10. “I Hear a Knockin’ at My Door” Song/Finger Play - Susan Salidor
11. “All the Way Around the World” - Katherine Dines
12. “Rainbow Love Song” - Kelli Welli
13. “Choose Happy” - Pam Felber
14. “Dance of Freedom” (feat. Dave Kinnoin & Jimmy Hammer) - Val Smalkin
15. “Shadows of the Sun” - Louise Ina Hetzler

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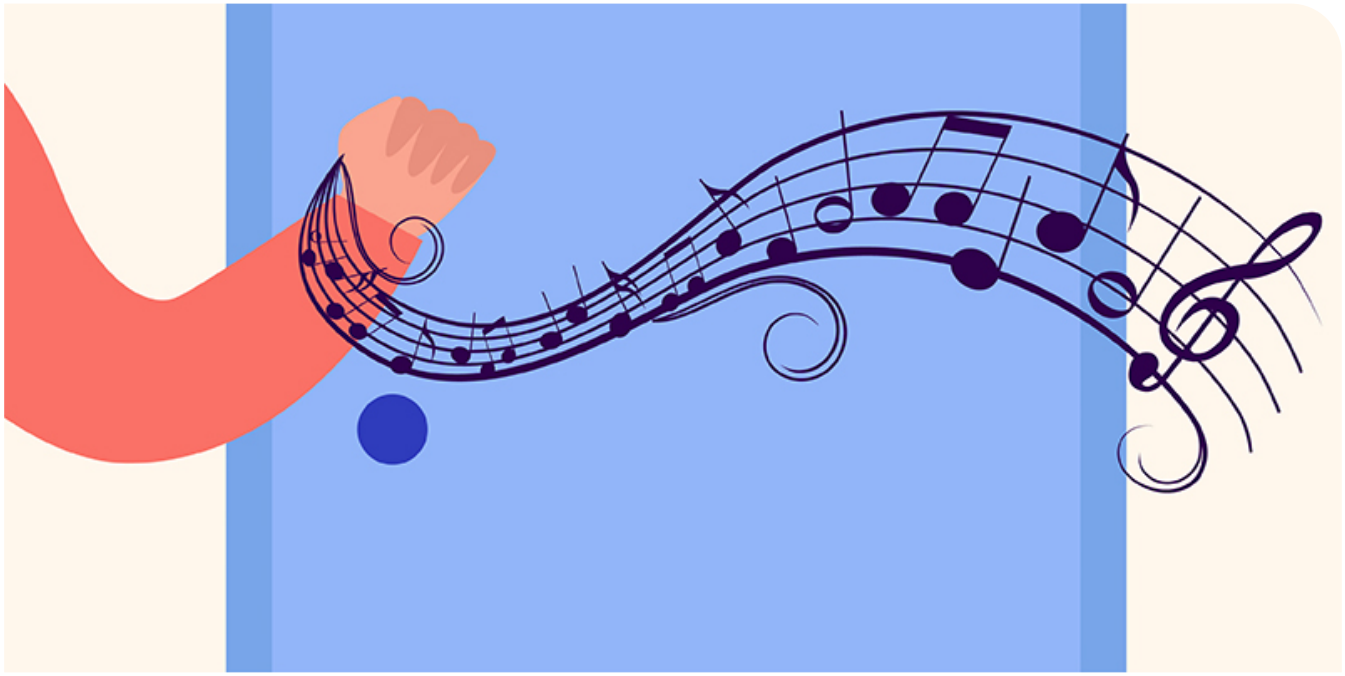
1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=videoseries



I Hear a Knockin' at My Door

words and music by Susan Salidor[1]
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From this issue's playlists, we chose to highlight Susan's sweet finger play, which is perfect for preschoolers. Along with teaching counting and repetition, it invites kids to feel the excitement of getting their favorite visitors!

Susan says:

"I wrote this song during the initial pandemic shutdown, when so many of us were isolated from regular routines and were dealing with estrangement from our friends, colleagues, and even family members.

"In my music classes, both in person and on Zoom these last few years, this song has proven to be highly engaging for young children as they imagine who might be coming to visit. I start the song with the person I'd most like to see and then use children's suggestions, in true zipper song fashion."

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1. https://susansalidor.com
2. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/media/pass-it-on/i-hear-a-knockin-at-my-door/I%20Hear%20a%20Knockin%20at%20My%20Door%20song%20sheet.pdf
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m97_itCM19o

I Hear a Knockin' at My Door

words and music by Susan Salidor
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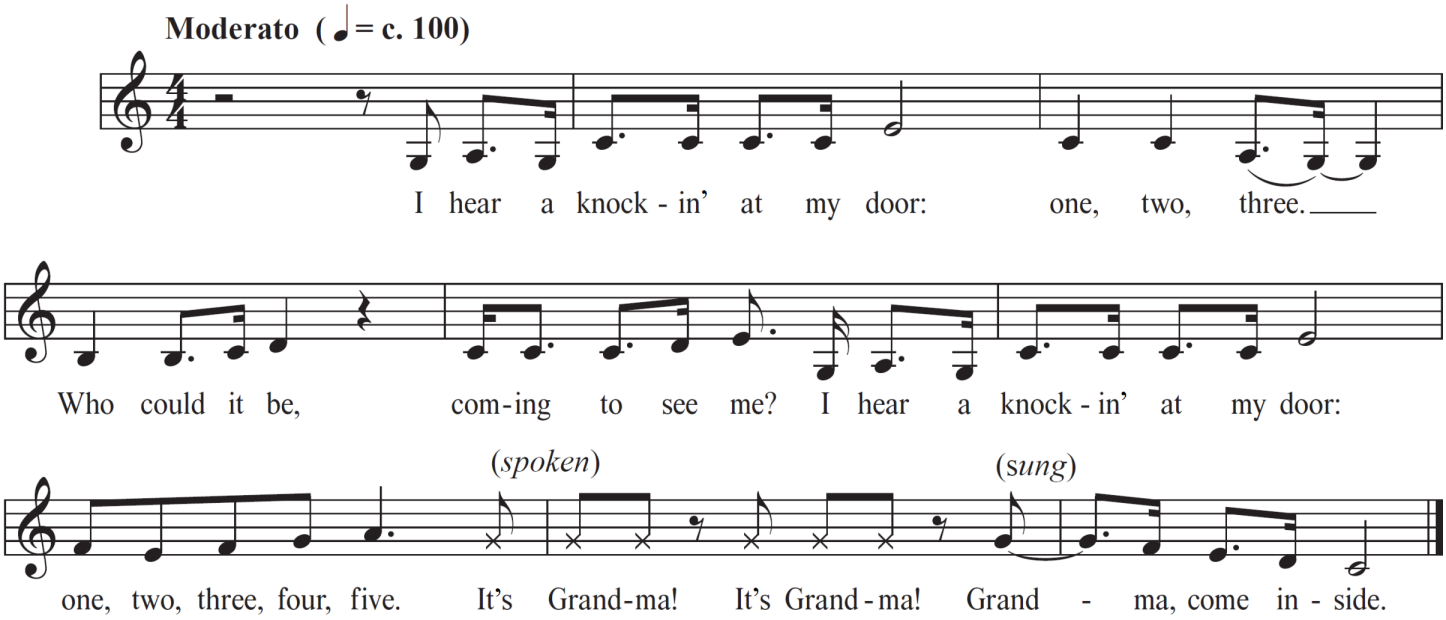
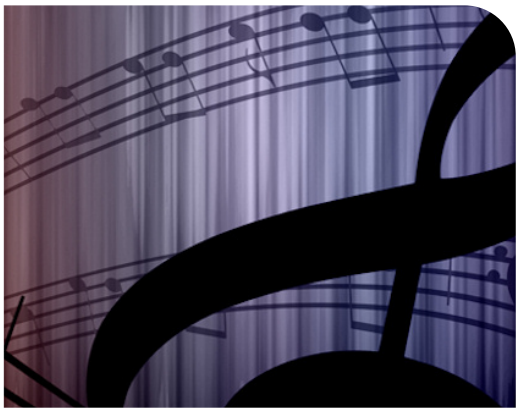

Moderato (♩= c. 100)
I hear a knock - in' at my door: one, two, three.
Who could it be, com-ing to see me? I hear a knock - in' at my door:
(spoken)
(sung)
one, two, three, four, five. It's Grand-ma! It's Grand - ma! Grand - ma, come in - side.

I hear a knockin' at my door:
One, two, three.
Who could it be coming to see me?
I hear a knockin' at my door:
One, two, three, four, five.
It's Grandma! It's Grandma!
Grandma, come inside.

About PIO!

Pass It On! publishes thoughtful, informative articles on children's music, empowering those who teach, write, perform, share, and produce it to strengthen their craft and their advocacy. All articles are open to the public, providing CMN members and the wider community with news about exciting programs, music history, business tips, and in-depth interviews with music legends. Our songs for children —serious and silly, traditional and brand new, for all ages and from all over the world—are meant to be learned and shared.



CMN members receive exclusive access to songs and to all issues of *Pass It On!* Join Now[1]

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How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

Articles

Pass It On! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

Playlists

Pass It On! playlists feature songs by CMN members on Spotify and YouTube. Songs related to each issue's theme will be solicited regularly.

Interested? Read our guidelines for submission[8] to *Pass It On!*

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